



## Apply now for grants to improve specialty-crop industries

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MADISON – The Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (DATCP) is accepting applications for the 2015 Specialty Crop Block Grant (SCBG) program. Optional grant-writing workshops are scheduled in February, and applications are due to DATCP by March 31.

Grants are awarded to projects intended to enhance the competitiveness of specialty crop industries through research, education or market development. Qualified projects are those meant to benefit the industry as a whole as opposed to benefiting one individual, farm or company. DATCP will use a competitive review process to select the most qualified projects and will submit Wisconsin's state plan to the USDA for approval and funding.

Specialty Crops include fruits, vegetables, tree nuts, nursery crops, herbs and more. Find a full list of eligible crops and more information about the program at [www.ams.usda.gov/scbgp](http://www.ams.usda.gov/scbgp).

Non-profits, producer organizations, government agencies, universities and other agricultural organizations are encouraged to apply. Applications may involve collaborations or partnerships between entities.

Grant funds will be awarded for projects up to three years in duration. Typical projects are awarded between \$10,000 and \$150,000. In anticipation of receiving funding, project contracts and work would begin in the fall.

Eligible project expenses include compensation for personnel, consultant services, materials and supplies, and miscellaneous costs. Those applicants that are awarded grants must provide at least 25 percent of the grant request as a matching contribution.

Optional workshops and webinars are scheduled for interested applicants.

- A 30-minute webinar/workshop will help participants determine if they have eligible projects that are likely to be funded. It is scheduled for 2 p.m. Tuesday, Feb. 3, at DATCP in Madison. Attend in person or online.
- A 90-minute SCBG application writing workshop will help participants tailor their projects and learn tips for completing the application form. Attend in person or online at 2 p.m. Tuesday, Feb. 17, at DATCP or in person at 2 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 19 in the city of Marathon.

To attend a workshop or webinar, or to get more information about the program, contact DATCP Grants Specialist Juli Speck at [juli.speck@wisconsin.gov](mailto:juli.speck@wisconsin.gov) or 608-224-5134.

Application materials are online at [http://datcp.wi.gov/Farms/Crops\\_and\\_Specialty\\_Crops](http://datcp.wi.gov/Farms/Crops_and_Specialty_Crops).

In October 2014, USDA awarded the state of Wisconsin \$1.4 million to fund 24 projects through the Specialty Crop Block Grant program. Projects included pest-management strategies for ginseng production, development of a sustainable beekeeping system at UW-River Falls, research on the use of neonicotinoids as seed treatment for processing vegetables and the possible impact on native or domestic pollinators, and the development of culinary skills training videos increasing the use of Wisconsin-grown specialty crops in schools lunch programs. To see the full list, visit [www.ams.usda.gov/scbgp](http://www.ams.usda.gov/scbgp).